

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

11. (Currently Amended) A process for separating essential oils from a plant containing an essential oil comprising the steps of:
- a. subjecting the essential oil-containing plant material to steam distillation using a steam distillation vessel to produce a mixture containing the essential oil and at least one hydrophilic phase;
 - b. contacting the mixture with a hydrophobic adsorbent in a column;
 - c. recycling the hydrophilic phase leaving the column to the steam distillation vessel ~~or extraction vessel~~; and
 - d. treating the adsorbent in the column with a solvent that is more hydrophobic than the hydrophilic phase to elute the essential oil from the adsorbent.